(b) if so, the details of such equipments deployed during the last five years and plans of DoT for the next five years; and

(c) when C-DOT technology is meeting the requirements of the country, the reasons for considering MNC technology?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA): (a) and (b) Extra large size switches having busy hour calling capability of 8,00.000 BH CA (Busy Hour Call Attempt) based on MNC technology produced by registered Indian manufacturers and PSUs are deployed in different cities. List of such exchanges deployed during the last five years is given in the Annexure [See Appendix 180, Annexure No 85]. Plans to deploy these switches are drawn annually. Plan for 1997-98 has not yet been finalised.

(c) The Deptt. of Telecom decided during 1991 to introduce these extra large size switches in order to meet the growing demand and also to introduce advanced facilities like Integrated Services Digital Network (ISDN), Intelligent Network (IN), CCS No. 7 Signalling etc. as that time C-DOT switches having such capability were not available.

Recently, i.e. in November 1996, C-DOT MAX-XL technology has been approved by DOT for 3,00,000 BHCA. C-DOT switches still do not support advance features such as ISDN, IN etc. Large scale production of these switches has also not commenced.

Works handled by Telecom Regulatory Authority of India

4123. SHRIMATI ANANDIBEN JETHABHAI PATEL: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that with the seting up of Telecom Regulatory Authority of India the work in the Ministry has decreased allowing it to look more into the policy-making and operational aspects; and

(b) if so, the details of the works to be handled by the Ministry and the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India separately?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA): (a) and (b) In pursuance of the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India Ordinance (No. 11 of 1997) promulgate on 25th January, 1997, the Central Government set up the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) with effect from 20th February, 1997 to provide a level playing field for fair competition and to engender further confidence in investors. Subsequently, the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India Ordinance, 1997 was replaced by an Act of Parliament. The powers and functions of the Authority are expected to enable it to effectively perform the role of watch-dog for the Telecom Sector.

2. In the context of the National Telecom Policy, 1994 whose objectives *inter alia*, include, achieving universal service, raising the quality of telecom services to world standards, providing a wide range of services to meet customers demands at reasonable prices, providing for participation of companies registered in India in basic and value-added services, making arrangements for protection and promotion of consumers' interests and ensuring fair competition, it was felt that separation of regulatory from service-providing functions was called for. The functions assigned to the TRAI include following:

(a) recommend the need and timing of introduction of a new service providers;

(b) recommend the terms and conditions of licence to a service providers;

(c) ensure technical compatibility and effective inter-connection between different services providers;

(d) regulate arrangements of sharing

of revenue, derived from providing telecommunications services, between different services providers;

(e) recommend revocation of licence for non-compliance of terms and conditions of licence;

(f) ensure compliance of terms and conditions of licence;

(g) protect the interest of customers of telecommunication services;

(h) settle disputes between service providers;

(i) fix rates for providing telecommunication within an outside India; and

(j) monitor the quality of service and conduct periodical surveys of such service provided by service providers.

3. While the role and powers conferred on the TRAI envisage a substantial measure of autonomy to the Authority, the functions relating to grant/revocation of licences and fixing terms and conditions of licences still vest with the Central Government. As per Section 25(2) of the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India Act, 1997, the TRAI shall, in exercise of its powers and performance of its functions, be bound by such directions on questions of policy as the Central Government may give in writing to it from time to time.

4. The TRAI has been set up mainly with a view to perform regulatory functions and, thereby, provide a level playing field in the Telecom Sector.

As a service provider, the Department Telecommunications (DoT) would come within the scope of TRAI's functions but its responsibilities, including in the field of policy, are not affected.

Printing of Telephone Directories

4124. SHRI BANGARU LAXMAN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the latest telephone directories Circle/District-wise printed and distributed to subscribers and upto what date were they corrected and available for collection by subscribers; and

(b) by when the next Directory expected to be published, Circle/District-wise; and the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA): (a) and (b) Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House as soon as possible.

Violation of Tender for Procuring Digital Exchanges from MNCs

4125. SHRI G. PRATHAPA REDDY: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that DoT procured 8.9 lakh lines of digital exchanges from MNCs against the tendered quantity of 2 lakh lines only; if so, the reasons therefor;

(b) the special features of ISDN facility in MNC switching technology and the cost;

(c) the number of subscribers as ondate who are using the ISDN service and the revenue being generated from these subscribers; and

(d) the number of subscribers using ISDN services in the developed countries?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATION (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA): (a) Yes, Sir. The Department procured 9.1 lakh lines of Digital Exchanges from the Companies registered to manufacture such equipment